

think one of the things that you mentioned is that we come down here every night. I have got to tell you, you know, you mentioned the race in which our Democratic write in candidate got more write-in votes than all of the Republicans combined, and the Democrat was in the three-way primary. It is unbelievable, because of the energy with which I think a lot of people in this country are willing to go to the polls and make some kind of changes.

But I am tired of coming down here and talking about this. I will be honest with you, Mr. Speaker. I want this fixed. I want an opportunity for us to put the PAYGO rules in place, to make the tough decisions. We get paid to make these tough decisions. Let's make them.

I mean, come on. You know what frustrates me? And it hit me as you pulled out the PAYGO chart. Zero Republicans voted for the PAYGO rules to be put in place. Of the millions of times we have actually tried to put them through, amendments and on the floor and motions to recommit and everything else, all of these different times that we have tried to do this, zero Republicans. But now they are having trouble passing the budget.

Well, maybe if they would have put these procedures in place, these constraints in place, we wouldn't have the problems. We don't even have a budget yet. It is May. It is the middle of May. The law says you are supposed to have it by April 15. So all of this is happening.

I think, Mr. MEEK, as we begin to wrap up here, that everything is happening in secrecy, under the dome, on Pennsylvania Avenue, with K Street. When you look at these K Street fairy tales that you just can't believe, it is the environmental meeting, everything is done in secret. A lot of the consumer groups and conservation groups are saying you are meeting with the oil companies and the oil companies are going to write this. They say no, no, no, no, and oil executives come before the Senate. Coincidentally, the Republican Senate does not swear them in to a hearing. Unbelievable.

They all say, "We weren't there. We don't know anything about it." Then we find out a few weeks ago they were all there. The White House memo comes out that they were there, all done in secrecy. Look at the energy policy we have. It is atrocious. Come on. Everyone knows it doesn't work. Go to the gas pump. We don't have to explain it.

Look at the war, all done in secrecy. Nobody is allowed in, not a lot of debate. The information, intelligence, everything is in secret, cherry-picking intelligence and all of this other stuff, all done in secret. Look at the end result. \$9 billion lost, no exit strategy. We are not greeted as liberators. We are not able to use the oil money for reconstruction. All the promises made haven't happened. Terrible.

Look at the Medicare bill. Same thing. All done in secret. The numbers

were wrong that they gave to the Congress about how much it was going to cost.

Then we find out today, Mr. MEEK, and I hate to end on this because we don't have a lot of time to talk about it, we find out now that the National Security Agency is secretly monitoring phone calls of the American people. This is the largest database ever assembled in the world, monitoring the phone calls of American citizens.

Now, give me a break. Enough of the secrecy, enough of the mismanagement, enough of the incompetence. Let's get the Democrats back in so we can implement some of these ideas that we have.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing us to be here. I would also like to thank the staff who is here who stays late with us many nights.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Just very quickly, Mr. Speaker, I know we have a minute left, I just want to say this, that it is important that we thank the Democratic leader and the Democratic leadership for allowing us to be here tonight.

Mr. RYAN, the web site that you gave out, [www.housedemocrats.gov/30Something](http://www.housedemocrats.gov/30Something), all of the charts you have seen here tonight and throughout the week, the Members can pull that down off of the website, Mr. Speaker.

#### TIME RUNNING OUT TO SIGN UP FOR MEDICARE PART D

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. INGLES of South Carolina). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the 30-Something Group for their leadership.

□ 2130

I come to the floor to remind all of the seniors that Monday, May 15, is the drop-dead date for signing up for Medicare part D. I am very concerned that over 15 million Americans have not signed up.

Congressman MEEK, may I ask you a question? Do you know why Monday, May 15, is the drop-dead date to sign up?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, it is set by the legislation passed by the Republican majority. And after that, Americans will be penalized.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, Americans are going to be penalized. I have been elected for 25 years. And this is the first time I have ever heard of being penalized until the day you die. I mean, it is ludicrous that we, the House of Representatives passed a bill that was so complicated and confusing, and gave you a time period of less than 5 months to sign up. And then if you do not sign up, you are going to be penalized until death.

I know in Florida we have 41 different plans. And it is very confusing.

Seniors should have an opportunity to take their time and to select a plan that best meets their needs.

Now, Mr. MEEK, do you know why in the law the Secretary does not have the authority to negotiate the price of drugs? Do you know why Americans pay 50 percent more than people in Canada?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, that was set forth by the Republican Congress. Many Democrats on this side, the super majority, voted against that measure.

Furthermore, this Government agency has found that even during this 5-month period that seniors were given the wrong information from the White House, the recommendation to go on those websites and call these numbers, the wrong information was given on the plan.

But better yet, they are still held responsible to this date. That is going to happen on Monday. And they will be penalized from this point on.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, you know in Florida, we have over 1 million people who have not signed up. And nationwide it is over 15 million people.

Now, I do not understand why the President with an executive order cannot be Presidential and extend the date or do away with the penalties.

People should not be held accountable for a program that is complicated and confusing. I have a cousin that is a Ph.D. graduate from the University of Miami, a principal for 30 years, and had to go to Social Security to get someone to help and assist to make the right decision because it is very, very complicated.

Mr. Speaker, I am asking seniors, please sign up—but there is no reason why this program, a program that is so needed, I voted against it because it was bloated, can you imagine, supposedly fiscally responsible Republicans coming up with a program that is billions of dollars, costing more than it needs to, and the money is going to the pharmaceutical companies.

The money is going to the industry, and not to the people that we need to be serving. It is a shame that in this people's House that we are not doing the work of the people.

Mr. Speaker, I am calling on the Members of this body and I am calling on the President so we can make it retroactive. Let us not punish seniors for our incompetency.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for the week of May 8.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to: